

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
MARINE CORPS CIVIL-MILITARY OPERATIONS SCHOOL
WEAPONS TRAINING BATTALION
TRAINING COMMAND
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STUDENT OUTLINE

OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT

CAC-PLAN-215

CIVIL-MILITARY OPERATIONS PLANNER COURSE

M020AQD

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

a. Terminal Learning Objectives

(1) Given a mission, commander's intent, CPB planning support products and as a member of a Civil-Military Operations Working Group, integrate Civil-Military considerations into the planning process, to support the commander's decision making by providing an understanding of the civil environment and the nature of the problem in order to identify an appropriate solution, in accordance with MCWP 3-33.1. (CAC-PLAN-2001)

(2) Given a mission, commander's intent, operations order, scenario, and CMO planning products (e.g. CMO staff estimate, CMO COA graphic and narrative, and a synch matrix, etc.), support stability operations planning, to enable the commander's decision making process by identifying instability and stability factors and to design activities to mitigate instability or reinforce stability factors within the operating environment in accordance with MCWP 3-33.1. (CACT-PLAN-2005)

b. Enabling Learning Objectives

(1) Without the aid of references, define operational assessment, in accordance with MCWP 3-33.1. (CAC-PLAN-20011)

(2) Without the aid of references, define the stability assessment framework process, in accordance with MCWP 3-33.1 appendix D. (CAC-PLAN-2005h)

1. **INTRODUCTION TO OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENTS.** Assessment involves deliberately comparing forecasted outcomes with actual events to determine the overall effectiveness of force employment. Based on their assessment, commanders adjust operations to ensure objectives are met and the military end state is achieved.

a. **Defining Assessment.** Assessment is the continuous monitoring and evaluation of the current situation and progress of an operation. The focus is on measuring progress toward the end state and delivering relevant reliable feedback into the planning process to adjust operations during execution. Assessments generally:

- (a) Occur at all echelons and levels of war
- (b) Focus on the purpose of an operation
- (c) Orient on the future
- (d) Reveal opportunities
- (e) Provide a basis for adaptation

b. **Why Assessment?** An assessment process helps staffs by identifying key aspects of the operation and providing the Commander information to estimate the overall progress of an operation as it unfolds in the battlespace. The CCIR process is linked to the assessment process by the commander's need for timely information and recommendations to make timely decisions.

c. **Types of Assessment**

(1) Combat assessment is a subset of the overall mission assessment of the operation. In some operations, the combat assessment as described below is a larger part of the operation.

(2) DoD defines combat assessment as the determination of the overall effectiveness of force employment during military operations. Combat assessment has three components: bomb damage assessment, munitions effectiveness, and re-attack recommendation.

(3) Functional assessment is assessment by warfighting function or any other function specific to an operation. In operations such as stability operations, combat actions are reduced. Here lies the complexity of assessments. When in

stability / counterinsurgency operations (or any other military action less than major combat), how does the commander assess non-combat actions?

d. **Adapting to Change.** Boyd's OODA LOOP is a cycle (Observe-Orient-Decide-Act) used to support decision making. Decision making requires an understanding of your capabilities, your surroundings, and your adversary.

(1) The operational environment continuously changes; although leaders may process information in the same manner, through forming and discarding mental images (orient / assess) as the operational environment changes. It's the individual's culture, genetic background and personal experiences coupled with situational understanding that make his perspective unique. Leaders must be able to orient to the conditions and characteristics (situational understanding) that exist in their operational environment to make relevant and timely decisions.

(2) Commanders who demonstrate the ability to process events as they unfold in a recurring cycle faster than their opponent generates the competitive advantage.

e. **Assessment Aids the Commander's Decision Making**

(1) The assessment process is personal to the commander (it's not HHQ's assessment). The commander is the focal point and provides to the staff and/or assessment cell his critical information requirements.

(2) The commander through his battle rhythm gains information from a variety of sources to enhance his situational awareness and to achieve a greater understanding of the operational environment.

(3) As events unfold in the battlespace the commander needs to know via his staff the difference between his desired end state and reality, the reason(s) for the difference and recommendations for change.

(4) Assessment actions and measures help commanders adjust operations and resources as required, determine when to execute branches and sequels, and make other critical decisions to ensure current and future operations remain aligned with the mission and end state.

2. **ASSESSMENT PLANNING**

a. **Assessment Considerations.** Things to consider when developing an assessment plan:

(1) The Commander must provide assessment focus. The assessment plan belongs to the commander and he provides the critical information requirements used in the development of the assessment plan.

(2) Balance the art with the science. Understanding the battlespace includes both structural and social complexities, recognizing that their cause and effect has a direct relationship on the assessment approach.

(3) A good information management plan is critical to feedback: the IM plan is essential to the continuous flow of information within the command and it starts with the commander identifying information requirements.

(4) Avoid over-engineering the assessment process, staffs can easily over-engineer the assess process which can lead to:

(a) Inward focus on the assessment process at the expense of an outward focus on the operational environment and how friendly action and reactions (battlespace) have influenced change.

(b) Staff exhaustion can potentially preclude the most important part of assessment: recommending what should be done based on an understanding of the "Why" events unfolding in the battlespace.

b. **Assessment Plan.** Assessment planning begins during problem framing when the commander and OPT consider what to measure and how to measure it to determine progress toward accomplishing a task, creating an effect, or achieving the end state. During planning and preparation for an operation, for example, the staff assesses the force's ability to execute the plan based on available resources and changing conditions in the operational environment. The development of objectives, supporting tasks and associated effects are essential to the assessment plan.

c. **Measure Operational Progress.** Measuring progress is an ad hoc responsibility assigned to the command element. There

are many functional areas within the MAGTF that require and develop measurements to determine the impact of completing assigned tasks on MAGTF operations. The CMO Planner will develop measurement criteria relative to CMO actions and their intended effect. Other examples where measurements may be developed:

- (1) Assessment Cell, if formed by the Commander, develops unit MOEs.

- (2) The staff develops MOP and MOE within their functional areas.

- (3) Subordinate Units:

- (a) Nest assessment effort with HHQ

- (b) Responsible for assessing assigned tasks

- (c) Develop unit MOP and MOE

d. **Developing an Assessment Plan.** Progress cannot be judged, nor execution or adjustment decisions made, without an accurate understanding of the current situation. During planning, commanders monitor the situation to develop facts and assumptions that underlie the plan. The assessment plan consists of the following components:

- (1) Bases for Comparison - information about the current situation that is compared with the forecasted situation described in the commander's intent and CONOPS (end state). This component is built during the Problem Framing step.

- (2) Evaluation Criteria - criteria in the forms of measures of performance (MOP) and measures of effectiveness (MOE) aid in determining progress toward performing tasks, achieving objectives, and attaining end state conditions. MOEs help determine if a task is achieving its intended results. MOPs help determine if a task is completed properly. MOEs and MOPs are simply criteria - they do not represent the assessment itself. MOEs and MOPs require relevant information in the form of indicators for evaluation.

- (a) Measure of Performance - DoD defines MOP as a criterion to assess friendly actions that are tied to measuring task accomplishment. MOPs have two parts and answer these questions, "Was the assigned task(s) accomplished? Was the

assigned task(s) accomplished to accepted standards? (i.e., *Are we doing things right?*) For example: Provide 500 gallons to the water to the resupply point daily. MOP 1 - Was 500 gallons of water delivered daily? MOP 2 - Was 500 gallons of water delivered in a usable condition?

(b) Measure of Effectiveness (MOE) - DoD defines MOE as a criterion used to assess changes in system behavior, capability, or operational environment that are tied to measuring the attainment of an objective (or ultimately the desired end state) or creation of an effect. It is important to note that MOEs (and their related indicators) do not measure what is done, but rather the effectiveness of what is done. (i.e., *Are we doing the right things?*) For example:

1. The MAGTF desired effect (objective) is "Host Nation provides basic human services." An associated MOE is "Increase/decrease in the availability of electricity in key urban areas."

2. One indicator might be reporting that the number of total kilowatt hours of electricity being produced at a particular servicing power plant is relatively high or stable. A second indicator, however, may indicate that transmission line failures for that urban area are increasing thus negatively impacting the overall availability of electricity (MOE) and, therefore, the provision of basic human services (effect).

(c) Assessment Measures - well devised measures can help the commanders and OPTs understand the relationship between specific tasks and desired effects. MOEs can be based on quantitative measures to reflect a trend and show progress toward a measurable threshold, but often qualitative measures better reflect MOEs. MOPs are used in most aspects of combat assessment, since it typically seeks specific, quantitative data or a direct observation of an event to determine accomplishment of tactical tasks.

(d) The assessment process and related measures should be **observable, relevant, measurable, responsive, and resourced** so there is no false impression of accomplishment. These measures are helpful in this regard:

1. Observable. Able to be used as a basis or reason for taking action.

2. Relevant. MOPs and MOEs should be relevant to the task, effect, operation, operational environment, end state, and commander's decisions. This criterion helps avoid collecting and analyzing information that is of no value to a specific operation. It also helps ensure efficiency by eliminating redundant efforts.

3. Measurable. Assessment measures should have qualitative or quantitative standards they can be measured against. To effectively measure change, a baseline measurement should be established prior to execution to facilitate accurate assessment throughout the operation. Both MOPs and MOEs can be quantitative or qualitative in nature, but meaningful quantitative measures are preferred because they are less susceptible to subjective interpretation.

4. Responsive. Assessment processes should detect situation changes quickly enough to enable effective response by the staff and timely decisions by the commander. The commander and staff should consider the time required for an action or actions to produce desired results within the operational environment and develop indicators that can respond accordingly. Many actions directed by the commander require time to implement and may take even longer to produce a measurable result.

5. Resourced. To be effective, assessment must be adequately resourced. Staffs should ensure that resource requirements for data collection efforts and analysis are built into plans and monitored. Effective assessment could help avoid duplication of tasks and unnecessary actions, which in turn can help preserve combat power.

6. Imposing countless measurements does not equate to success. The OPT planners and/or assessment cell must monitor their requirements levy on the subordinate units. Too many collection requirements may yield little return.

(3) Collecting Feedback - collecting and reporting changes in the operational environment is a critical part of the assessment plan. Most important is determining how the Commander and Staff will obtain this feedback. Defining the collection process during planning is essential to its success. CMO Planners must determine the format, frequency, and how the information will be communicated to the command element.

(a) Given the assessment measure:

1. Determine *HOW* that information will be collected from the environment.

2. Determine *WHO* will collect that information from the environment.

3. Capture the HOW and WHO and incorporate this information into the Civil Information Management Plan (CIM).

4. Ensure that the CIM plan is integrated into the Information Management (IM) Plan.

(b) Collect considerations (CMO):

1. Situation Reports

2. Spot Reports (SALUTE)

3. Civil Reconnaissance

4. Key Leader Engagements

(4) Recommendations - monitoring and evaluating are critical activities; however, assessment is incomplete without recommending or directing action. Assessment may diagnose problems, but unless it results in recommended adjustments, its use to the commander is limited.

(a) Based on the evaluation of progress, the staff brainstorms possible improvements to the plan and makes preliminary judgments about the relative merit of those changes. Staff members identify those changes possessing sufficient merit and provide them as recommendations to the commander or make adjustments within their delegated authority.

1. Recommendations to the commander range from continuing the operation as planned, executing a branch, or making adjustments not anticipated. Making adjustments includes assigning new tasks to subordinates, reprioritizing support, adjusting the ISR plan, and significantly modifying the COA.

2. Commanders integrate recommendations from the staff, subordinate commanders, and other partners with their personal assessment. From those recommendations, they decide if and how to modify the operation to better accomplish the mission.

(b) Although several ways to improve a particular aspect of the operation might exist, some recommendations could impact other aspects of the operation. As with all recommendations, the staff should address any future implications.

3. **ASSESSMENT MODEL**

a. **Assessment Process**. Assessment is continuous; it precedes and guides every operations process activity and concludes each operation or phase of an operation. Broadly, assessment consists of the following activities:

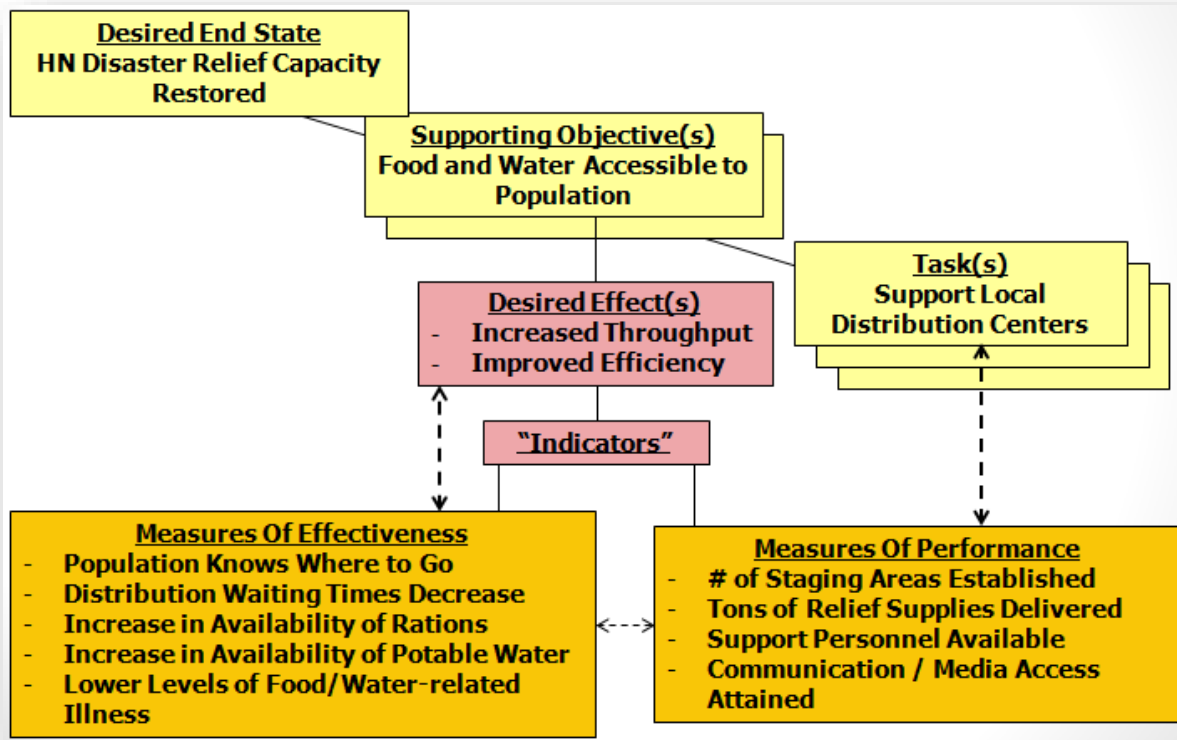
(1) Monitoring - the current situation to collect relevant information. Monitoring within the assessment process allows staffs to collect relevant information, specifically that information about the current situation that can be compared with the forecasted situation described in the commander's intent and CONOPS.

(2) Feedback - the continuous collection and flow of information about the current situation in the operational environment identifying changes as a result of military actions to provide a sense of reality. The type and frequency of collection should be in accordance with the IM/CIM plan. Validate the information provided prior to evaluating it.

(3) Evaluating progress toward attaining end state conditions, achieving objectives, and performing tasks.

(a) Analysis activities - during planning, specific objectives were created to achieve a particular effect in the battlespace. Now, determine the success of each task completed and if the effect was achieved. If the effect was not achieved, further analysis may be required determine the necessary corrective action(s). Do not rely on single source reporting! Be sure to cross check your results with other staff sections to enhance the accuracy of the analysis.


(b) Analysis - utilizing measures (MOPs/MOEs) to determine the difference between the actual situation and what the plan forecasted the situation would be at the time or event. Indicators provide evidence that a certain condition exists or certain results have or have not been attained, and enable decision makers to direct changes to ongoing operations to ensure the mission remains focused on the end state.



(4) Recommending or directing action for improvement - the staff presents the results and conclusions of its assessments and recommendations to the commander regarding actions for improvements or operation modifications to better accomplish the mission. As with all recommendations, the staff should address any future implications.

b. **Assessment Brief.** The assessment cell or staff will brief the Commander on the progress of the operation. At this time the results and conclusions along with recommendations are presented to the commander.

c. **Assessment Products.** Assessment products are used to support recommendations presented to the commander. Ensure that the product used to present the information is approved by the Commander. Assessment Product Example:

LOO	Essential Services
BN Objective:	Potable Water Available
Essential Tasks:	1. Drill Well 2. Publicize Coalition Efforts
Desired Effect:	Local populace does not support the insurgents
Progress:	Contract signed; locals hired, construction underway Locals providing actionable intelligence
Assessment:	Adaptive insurgents continue to leverage unemployed workers in Village X thus threatening the security situation.
Recommendations:	Maintain continuous presence in Village X. Pursue additional Essential Services contracts using local labor. Continue periodic Bn operations in conjunction with Nation X forces to maintain initiative.
30-Day Outlook	

4. **STABILITY ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK.** The Stability Assessment Framework (SAF) is an analytical, planning, and programming tool designed to support the Civil Affairs (CA) methodology and non-lethal targeting approaches used during MAGTF operations. SAF helps Marines and civilian practitioners identify sources of instability and stability (SOI/S) and design programs or activities that address SOI/S and measure their effect in fostering stability.

a. **Defining the SAF Process.** The SAF methodology has four basic components, nested within both the CA methodology and the Marine Corps Planning Process. These components (*Civil Preparation of the Battlespace, Analysis, Design, and Execution*) complement and enhance existing planning and execution processes used during civil-military operations.

b. As described earlier, there are various types of assessments. As utilized in the SAF process, assessment tends to be more functional and localized in nature. SAF objectives and MOEs are determined in the *Analysis* component with MOPs determined in the *Design* component. Monitoring and evaluation of SAF objectives occurs during *Execution* and is conducted on the following three levels: performance, effect, and overall stability.

(1) MOPs track the accomplishment of an individual activity (output) answering whether the activity being performed and making progress.

(2) MOEs measure an individual activity's impact and are generally evaluated after an activity has progressed to a point of having some impact on the operating environment.

(3) Overall stability is the third level of assessment. Rather than measuring the effect of individual activities, it takes into account the effect of ALL the activities conducted over a longer period of time, as well as the influence of external factors. It asks, "Is stability increasing or decreasing?" Key to measuring overall stability is identifying good indicators, creating a baseline, and then tracking the indicators at regular intervals, starting as early as possible.

c. A single indicator is incapable of measuring overall stability. Stability indicators normally aggregate to build a complete sight picture. Therefore, planners must establish and track metrics methodically to inform progress and to maintain an iterative process of stability activity refinement.

REFERENCES:

MCWP 3-33.1 MAGTF Civil-Military Operations
MCWP 5-1 Marine Corps Planning Process
Commander's Handbook for Assessment Planning and Execution,
Version 1.0, 9 September 2011

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.